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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS AND G/TIP

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TAGS: [KTIP](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM SENTENCES FIVE FOR TRAFFICKING WOMEN TO MALAYSIA

REF: HCMC 1063 and previous

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The recent decision by a court in the Mekong Delta city of Can Tho to hand down stiff sentences ranging from 5 to 17 years to five individuals convicted of trafficking women to Malaysia demonstrates continuing dedication among law enforcement and the courts in the south to combating human trafficking. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On December 30, 2008, local press and media reported that five human traffickers were convicted for trafficking women to Malaysia and forcing them to work as prostitutes. Trial reports indicated that the trafficking ring sent approximately 18 women from the southern Mekong Delta region to Malaysia from 2005 until January 2008, when the ring leaders were arrested.

¶3. (SBU) Hua Thi Thuy Trang, 35 - identified in media reports as a former prostitute-turned-trafficker who had worked in Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore - was sentenced to 17 years, while her four accomplices received 5 to 12 year sentences. One of the accomplices mentioned by name, Thai Nham Ty, formerly Vice Director of Tai Loc Construction Company in An Giang Province, was arrested for procuring fake passports for the trafficked women (for which he was paid approximately USD 200-\$250 per passport) and introducing the candidates to the ringleader for selection. The gang lured the women to Malaysia with promises of waitressing jobs and USD 800 cash payments to their families in exchange for promissory notes that the women would agree to pay the traffickers USD 4,400 dollars each. Once in Malaysia, the women reported that they were closely guarded and forced to have sex with about seven men per day each without compensation, and that those who resisted were beaten and starved.

¶4. (SBU) Lieutenant Colonel Le Thanh Kiem of HCMC's anti-TIP police (Unit PC-14) said that the trial was another great example of the Vietnamese government's strong determination to address TIP issues. LtC. Kiem said his office is currently working on an investigation involving another trafficking ring uncovered in early December which allegedly sold over 100 women to brothels in Malaysia. This ring involved many suspects from Tay Ninh province and other Mekong Delta areas. Between 2005 and 2007, Vietnamese police have uncovered 900 trafficking cases involving 2,200 victims, according to state media reports. Due to the lack of resources and reliable provincial statistics, the true extent of the trafficking is unknown, but police suspect many of the more than 20,000 Vietnamese women and children who have gone missing since 1975 could be victims of trafficking.

¶5. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Hanoi.

FAIRFAX